

Test Valley Borough Council Next Local Plan - Refined Issues and Options Consultation

COMMENTS FORM

Test Valley Borough Council has published for public participation its Refined Issues and Options document. This is the second stage of preparing the next Local Plan, which follows the Issues and Options consultation in 2018.

You can respond to our consultation by filling out the form below. Further information can be found on our website at: www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan

The consultation period runs from Friday 3 July 2020 to 4.30pm on 28 August 2020. Please respond before the close of the consultation period.

Once the form has been completed, please send to

If you are unable to send via email, please send a postal copy to our address below.

Contacting us

We are happy to help. If you have any queries, please contact us at:
Planning Policy and Economic Development Service
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP10 3AJ

Tel: 01264 368000

Website: www.testvalley.gov.uk/nextlocalplan

Part A: Your Details

Please fill in all boxes marked with an *

Title*Mr		First Name*	
Surname*			
Organisation* <i>(If responding on behalf of an organisation)</i>			

If you wish your comments to be acknowledged and to be kept informed of progress, please provide your email address below:

Email Address*	
----------------	--

If you don't have an email address and wish your comments to be acknowledged and to be kept informed of progress, please provide your postal address.

Address*		
	Postcode	

If you are an agent please give the name/company/organisation you are representing:

--

Personal Details and General Data Protection Regulation

Please note that representations cannot be treated as confidential. If you are responding as an individual, rather than as an organisation, we will not publish your contact details (email/postal address and telephone number) or signatures online, however the original representations will be available for public viewing at our offices by prior appointment. All representations and related documents will be held by the Council for a period of 6months after the next Local Plan is adopted.

The Council respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your personal data. Further details on the General Data Protection Regulation and Privacy Notices are available on our website

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/accesstoinformation/gdpr>



BJC PLANNING

**RESPONSE TO THE TEST VALLEY
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

**RESPONSES MADE ON BEHALF OF
THE OWNERS OF SPENCERS FARM
KINGS SOMBOURNE**

KINGS SOMBOURNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There are no specific questions with regard to Neighbourhood Plans in the Issues and Options Consultation. Paragraphs 5.20 to 5.23 outline the current position. These comments are made with regard to the issue of Neighbourhood Plans and with specific reference to Kings Sombourne.
- 1.2 The evolution of the Kings Sombourne Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates all of the weaknesses of this concept. The first issue is the excessive gestation period. The Neighbourhood Forum agreed to promote a Neighbourhood Plan in December 2015. My clients agreed to become involved in the process at that time. It is over four and half years since this start date and the Plan still hasn't been finalised.
- 1.3 The inevitable lack of detailed knowledge of the planning and infrastructure issues have added to the delay. This means that the Neighbourhood Forum is obliged to seek external advice from the District Council and other bodies.

2.0 CONSULTATION WITH THE PARISH AND DISTRICT COUNCILS

- 2.1 An initial presentation of the owners site was made to the Parish Committee in February 2016. In November, a further presentation was made to update the position and in December 2016 a Pre-Application proposal showing a layout for 28 dwellings was submitted to the District Council.

Pre-application Consultation

- 2.2 A Pre-application Consultation was undertaken with the District Council in 2017. The objective was to demonstrate that the site at Spencers Farm had no overriding constraints. Reports had been prepared covering all of the essential matters including landscape impact, highway access, ecology, flood risk, surface water drainage and foul drainage. Kings Sombourne is served by the main road linking Romsey, Stockbridge and Andover. This is a relatively sustainable location away from the rural roads of the hinterland.

- 2.3 A further presentation was made to the Parish Council explaining the proposals and advising that the scheme had been modified to meet the comments of the Parish Council. Objections were raised to the number of units (28).
- 2.4 The land owners accepted a reduction in the proposed number of units for their land to 12 of which four are proposed to be affordable. This is in circumstances where the site could easily accommodate double this number.
- 2.6 This meant that the length of the access road serving the 12 units is very long and expensive to construct passing through the length of the site. Other elements of the infrastructure have to be oversized at considerable cost too.
- 2.7 Essentially, this is a waste and it means underutilising the land which would be an issue if the proposal was made in a planning proposal elsewhere. The modest increase in numbers can be accommodated without any greater impact on the landscape or the village.
- 2.8 There is a great need to provide more housing in the rural areas. The failure to provide more housing in the rural villages has created enclaves of great wealth and expensive housing and an ageing population. The less wealthy have to rely on affordable housing. The services including shops and schools and community facilities suffer gradual decline.
- 2.9 Every settlement and village needs to be assessed to examine its potential to accommodate more development. The combination of affordable housing with self build/custom build plots would help both.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The government is very supportive of the provision of self build housing. The Case Officer also advised that the District Council would support the provision of self build plots. The land owners have agreed to promote the 8 private units as self build or custom build dwellings with 4 affordable units thereby consistent with Council policies. Discussions with the District Council

has confirmed that there is a substantial requirement for affordable housing in the village.

- 3.2 The self build/custom build dwellings will undoubtedly be constructed to very high standards with very high energy efficiency standards. Self build and custom build housing should be encouraged to consider the future proofing of the houses to enable the occupiers to remain in their homes for a long as possible. Self build/custom build housing are typically built to very high quality designs.
- 3.3 Preference in any scheme would be given to applicants with a local connection for the affordable units.
- 3.4 It was recognised at the outset that any development must have the support of local residents. It is also recognised that “the proposal must be supported by evidence that there is need for the development to maintain or enhance the sustainability of the settlement through the delivery of community benefit”.
- 3.5 The District Council acknowledge in its response to the SHLAA submission that “this site is in a sustainable location as it is well located close to the facilities in the village. This includes a post office, three churches, a primary school, small businesses, two public houses, two community facilities and two general stores” (SHLAA 2015).
- 3.6 Other community benefits are possible. There is the opportunity to integrate the existing Recreation Ground into the scheme to provide a substantial benefit for both the existing residents and residents of the proposed development. There is the opportunity to create a more useable open space. This could be a matter for discussion with local residents.
- 3.7 The Highway Officer has also suggested that the footpath within the scheme should be aligned with the footpath to the cemetery. A pedestrian link is also proposed by extending Muss Lane. It is proposed to retain the northern part of the site as open space with a LEAP for use as a children’s play space. This would provide a new facility to serve both the future residents of the development and the wider community.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The protracted discussions have resulted in significant delays to the finalisation of the Neighbourhood Plan. It has taken 4 and half years so far and the Covid 19 pandemic will cause further delay.
- 4.2 This may not be of concern to the residents of King Sombourne but it has been very expensive for the land owners who have simply tried to meet the requirements of the community.
- 4.3 This development could have proceeded some time ago. It appears to have the support of the community as the draft Neighbourhood Plan favoured the site.
- 4.4 The delay is frustrating for land owners as the future of their property is uncertain.
- 4.5 The District Council should consider intervening to allow unconstrained sites such as the one at Spencers Farm to come forward now. This would simply bring forward the site in accordance with the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

